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Patterns of History and America's Future: A Scholarly Debate at the Library

Fred Wakeman (left), William H. McNeill, Leonard C. Bruno, and Masahiro Sakamoto at the Library on March 12.

Are there, in fact, patterns of global historical change, notably the rise and decline of great nations? If so, how can one tell when a country's "decline" is imminent or already taking place?

Such questions were discussed by a distinguished group of scholars invited to the Library of Congress by Librarian James H. Billington for an all-day session on March 12 to consider the topic, "Civilizations, Change, and Historical Processes."

According to Dr. Billington, the discussion was intended to provide at least a "sophisticated demurral" to the notion, fashionable in the academic world, that America is in decline—the end result of a typical pattern of economic growth of a Great Power, followed by imperial "over-stretch," and then loss of economic and political preeminence. This is the thesis offered by Yale historian

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Patterns *(Cont. from p. 97)*

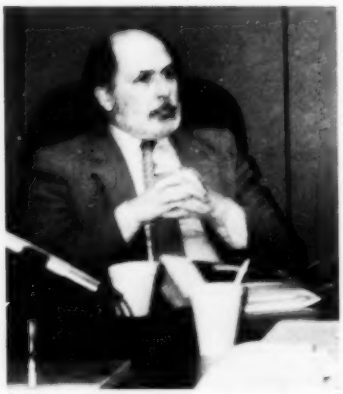
Paul Kennedy in his bestseller, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987).

Can one demonstrate clear patterns in history? William H. McNeill of the University of Chicago said some cyclical patterns seem obvious, but their importance depends on the timespan selected. For example, "boom-and-bust" in the marketplaces of the West has occurred once or twice per decade since the 14th century, but over the longer term there has been a steady expansion of world markets and proliferation of goods available to ordinary folk.

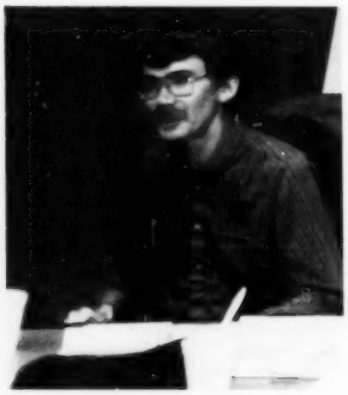
The "rise-and-fall" thesis seems to hold up when applied to the "succession of hegemonic states" that has dominated the politics of the West—Spain, France, Britain, and the United States—Professor McNeill said. However, he added, it is not the only discernible pattern. Some civilizations—such as those of Mesopotamia, ancient China, ancient India, and the ancient Mediterranean world—were divided into rival states that fought until a single victor emerged.

Thus was created what historian Arnold J. Toynbee 40 years ago called the "universal state"—and Toynbee believed that contemporary international conflicts would eventually only end with the establishment of an "empire of the world."

"The use of terms like 'rise and fall' is heavily charged with emotional connotations," Professor McNeill warned. "This obfuscates serious deliberation."



Seyyed Hossein Nasr.



Michael Mann.

Any change in a country's prospects creates public anxiety, he said. Such was the case after World War I, when H. G. Wells' gloomy *Outline of History* (1920) caused a stir, and after World War II when the single-volume abridged edition of Toynbee's *A Study of History* (1946) had far greater impact in America than anything since published on the future of the West.

As Seyyed Hossein Nasr of George Washington University noted, most American discussions of history are "Eurocentric," projecting the West's experience onto the rest of the world in global theories. It is much like psychiatry, he said; Freud's clinical findings about troubled Viennese women are seen as perfectly applicable to peasants in Hokkaido, Japan.

Small wonder, Professor Nasr added, that Western specialists did not realize that modern economic development would fail to "dilute the Islamic belief system." The rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 took them completely by surprise.

Chinese history does not fit the European "great power" model, either, observed sinologist Fred Wakeman of the Social Science Research Council. China's periods of decay and prosperity have followed a more mysterious pattern, he said.

If "decline"—whether it fits some theoretical pattern or not—is imminent in a society, how can one spot the signs? Most of the discussants seemed to agree with sociologist Michael Mann of the University of California, Los Angeles, that one warning sign is the unwillingness of a society's elite to burden itself in its own defense. This seems to be increasingly the case in Western Europe (as in Rome when mercenaries largely took over the defense of the empire).

Participants appeared to concur that the decay of a shared core of beliefs—in religion, in patriotism, in civic duty—was also a danger signal. In America, Dr. Billington observed, most academics simply do not discuss such key factors in their assessments of the nation's prospects.

What *about* the future of the

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Bruce Tapper, Editor

United States? In contrast to many Japanese, Professor Masahiro Sakamoto of Kobe University was optimistic, more optimistic than some of the American discussants. He cited the flexibility of American institutions, the freer world the United States helped to create after World War II, and the nation's hospitality to newcomers and new ideas.

In any case, said Dr. Billington, "the only available crystal ball is a rearview mirror with a wide-angle lens."

The meeting at the Library was organized by Ronald A. Morse of the Library's Development Office and Neil Kotler of the Smithsonian Institution. Funding was provided by Nichimen America, Inc.

Among participants in the discussions were: **James H. Billington,** Library of Congress; **Leonard C. Bruno,** Science and Technology Division, Library of Congress; **Seyyed Hossein Nasr,** Department of Islamic Studies, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; **Michael Mann,** Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles; **William H. McNeill,** Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C.; **Mancur Olson,** Department of Economics, University of Maryland, College Park, Md.; **Masahiro Sakamoto,** Department of Economics, Kobe University, Japan; and **Fred Wakeman,** Social Science Research Council, New York, N.Y.

Library Investigation Uncovers Improper Use Of Fedlink by Military

James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress, announced that an internal investigation has uncovered improper use of the Library's Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK) by certain military agencies which may have tried to bypass regular Pentagon procurement procedures in awarding research contracts.

"We have ordered FEDLINK to cancel these contracts or transfer them to the proper Pentagon authorities," said Dr. Billington. "The investigation is continuing."

The Library's Inspector General, John W. Rensbarger, alerted Pentagon authorities to the problem and is working with them on the investigation.

Under Library of Congress jurisdiction, FEDLINK administers information and library services contracts on behalf of member libraries and information centers, in order to get the best possible price for the government. Such FEDLINK contractual services are open to any Federal entity, including military organizations. FEDLINK has grown since 1976 to become the nation's largest provider of automated library network services. It gives government libraries and other government participants access to hundreds of databases and to many new information technologies.

However, during a Library investigation which began last January, Mr. Rensbarger said, it became clear that FEDLINK had been signing contracts for services which had nothing to do with libraries or information databases. Among the services to be provided by various contractors were "an analysis, assessments and independent appraisals of the Navy's AH-1W Night Targeting System"; "development of a standard Missile-1 Security Plan"; services "in support of the Army Machine Gun Program."

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The Library of Congress observes
TWO HUNDRED YEARS
Congress

Congress Bicentennial Program

Exhibition

The Tides of Party Politics: Two Centuries of Congressional Elections, 1789–1989.

A display of one hundred maps of the congressional elections from 1789 to 1989, dramatizing the births, deaths, and shifts of political parties in the U.S.

Madison Foyer, February 8 to July 30.

Conference

Sixth Annual Forum on Federal Information Policies

A conference sponsored by the Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC) at the Library of Congress to explore the Congress's role in formulating the nation's information policies. Featured speakers will include Rep. Robert E. Wise, Jr. (D-W.Va.), Harold Relyea (CRS), Ralph Nader, Walter Berns (Georgetown University), and John H. Gibbons (Director, Office of Technology Assessment). Registration required ($65).

Mumford Room, James Madison Memorial Building, March 22, 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Publication

Resectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations Requested from the Congressional Research Service

A 520-page clothbound book, available by mail for $29 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (cite stock no. 030-001-0016-4 when ordering); also available in person in the Library's Sales Shop.

Fedlink *(Cont. from p. 99)*

By using FEDLINK's contracting services, procurement officers at several U.S. military installations, such as the Navy's Charleston Naval Shipyard or the Air Force's Seventh Communications Group, apparently bypassed special Pentagon rules on competitive bidding and other procurement procedures.

The questionable contracts, said Mr. Rensbarger, involved orders from various Army, Navy, and Air Force units totaling some $45 million in fiscal year 1988, which ended last September. (Total FEDLINK activities in fiscal 1988 involved contracts for $97.1 million with 135 vendors to provide service for some 1,395 different Federal entities, ranging from the Department of Agriculture Library to the United States Information Agency Library as well as military organizations. These contracts were covered by 3,560 Federal interagency agreements.)

"We still do not know why these inappropriate contracts were made," said Mr. Rensbarger. "Our investigation and that of the Defense Department are continuing."

Recent Publications From NLS/BPH

The following recent publications are available free on request from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20542:

Talking Book Topics, May-June, July-August, September-October, and November-December 1988, Volume 54, Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6, ISSN 0039-9183. Bimonthly annotated listing of books added to the Library of Congress national talking-books collection. Includes news about free library services for blind and physically handicapped readers and lists popular magazines recorded on cassettes and discs. In large print, on cassette, and on disc.

Braille Book Review, May-June, July-August, September-October, and November-December 1988, Volume 57, Numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6, ISSN 0006-873X. Bimonthly annotated listing of books added to the Library of Congress national braille collection. Also reports on free library service for blind and physically handicapped readers, announces books available from independent agencies, and lists popular magazines produced in braille. In large print and braille.

News, April-June, July-September, and October-December 1988, Volume 19, Numbers 2, 3, and 4, ISSN 0160-9211. This report on national and international activities in library services for blind and physically handicapped individuals is distributed quarterly to the national network of cooperating libraries and agencies serving blind and physically handicapped readers. In print and braille.

Update, April-June, July-September, and October-December 1988, Volume 11, Numbers 2, 3, and 4, ISSN 0160-9203. Quarterly newsletter with information for and about volunteer programs and individual volunteers who produce recorded and braille material and maintain equipment used by talking-book readers. In print and braille.

Cassette Books 1988, ISSN 0363-9029. Annotated catalog of adult and young adult books recorded on cassette for blind and physically handicapped readers during 1988. Titles, which have previously been announced in *Talking Book Topics,* are arranged by subject category under nonfiction and fiction headings. In large print and on flexible disc.

Braille Books 1987-1988, ISSN 0277-5247. Annotated catalog of press-braille and handcopied-braille books produced for adults and young adults during 1987 and 1988. Titles, which have previously been announced in *Braille Book Review,* are arranged by subject category under nonfiction and fiction headings. In large print and braille.

For Younger Readers: Braille and Talking Books 1986-1987, ISSN 0093-2825. Annotated catalog of books produced during 1986 and 1987 on disc, on cassette, and in braille for children from preschool through grade 9 and for young adults. Titles, which have previously been announced in *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review,* are arranged by subject categories under nonfiction and fiction headings. A section on books "For Very Young Readers" lists titles available in print with braille overlays, as well as books in recorded formats. Available in large print and braille editions; braille edition lists only braille titles.

Foreign Language Books 1988, ISSN 0748-4615. A catalog of all the foreign-language titles produced on disc, on cassette, and in braille to date by NLS. Includes annotations in Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. In large print and on flexible disc.

Library Resources for the Blind and Physically Handicapped 1988, ISSN 0364-1236. A directory of the national library service – providing recorded and braille materials to blind and physically handicapped persons – that is administered by NLS. Includes information on NLS network libraries and machine-lending agencies; other national library resources; and readership, circulation, and budget statistics. In print.

Magazines in Special Media 1988, ISSN 0889-6518. Listing of periodicals available on cassette, computer diskette, and disc; and in braille, large print, and moon type. Part I describes magazines available from NLS by direct subscription. Part II lists magazines that are not part of the NLS program and provides ordering information. In large print, on disc, and in braille.

Fishing 1988. Information about fishing and individuals' fishing experiences. Lists books available on disc, on cassette, and in braille. In large print.

Bibles, Other Scriptures, Liturgies, and Hymnals in Special Media 1988 (88-1, May 1988). Reference circular providing information on sources of

literature of world religions, including scriptures, commentaries, concordances, liturgies, prayerbooks, and hymnals. In large print and braille and on cassette and disc.

Guide to Spoken-Word Recordings: Foreign-Language Instruction and Literature 1988 (88-2, December 1988). Reference circular listing sources for recordings of both literature and instruction in various foreign languages. Also includes recordings for instruction in English as a second language. In print and on disc.

Institute on East Asian Librarianship Held

The following report gives highlights from the 1988 Summer Institute on East Asian Librarianship, which was the first such gathering for East Asian librarians since 1969 and may be useful to the field:

Twenty participants took part in the Summer Institute on East Asian Librarianship, sponsored by the University of Washington, Seattle, and funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Meeting in July at the University of Washington, Seattle, participants attended lectures and workshops focusing on the state of the field and library automation for the first week and on traditional bibliography and the education of librarians for the second.

Merle N. Boylan, director of libraries at the University of Washington, in a keynote address, emphasized the need for better cooperation among libraries. Most libraries have a mix of local, vendor, and national systems represented in their catalogs.

The tendency to place inordinately high value upon local excellence impedes standardization and cooperation. Before international cooperation can be successful, Dr. Boylan said, libraries must show more success in cooperating within their own countries.

Warren Tsuneishi, chief of the Asian Division, Library of Congress, stated that the development of cooperative agreements on standardized cataloging and romanization systems are the bedrock of bibliographic control. He cited many examples of resource sharing and of cooperative and shared cataloging projects among East Asian libraries. Even with increased communication between institutions and automated systems, he saw a need for participants to continue to strive for improved communications with each other and with users.

Hitoshi Inoue, professor and director of the Science Information Research Division of the National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS), spoke on the need for the establishment of official, stable character sets in each country. Disagreements between national character sets, and sometimes absence of agreement over a single character set within a country, impede national and international exchange of bibliographic data. The Library of Congress' administration of the North American character set was considered a very positive safeguard.

Ron Hosogi, director of Far Eastern operations for Microsoft Corporation, spoke about 2-byte codes for Asian scripts on microcomputers. Microsoft designs software for other firms to fit the language requirements in the Far East. Different packages are prepared for each market, but Microsoft tries to make them compatible, using the double-byte character set. There must exist a certain agreement about standardization of automated systems within countries for companies such as Microsoft to create economically marketable software.

The institute's participants came from libraries that are members of either the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) or the Research Libraries Group (RLG). Informative presentations about those cooperative systems were well received. Andrew Wang, director of the Pacific Area Program for OCLC, provided an introduction to the OCLC CJK 350 system and the OCLC Asian-Pacific programs. Karen Smith-Yoshimura, program officer and CJK specialist for the Research Libraries Group, lectured about the structure, problems, and issues involved in developing the East Asian programs at RLG, and gave an overview of several RLG programs.

John B. Graves, senior automation planning specialist in the Automation Planning and Liaison Office of the Library of Congress, discussed the future of bibliographic control at the Library of Congress. He described the Linked Systems Project (LSP) bibliographic application, which will link different systems with the Library of Congress to provide one of the necessary elements for a successful cooperative catalog, namely, a way to communicate high quality cataloging to other libraries. Until the LSP bibliographic application becomes available, the Library of Congress will be coordinating the exchange of tapes between the two networks and the Library.

Speakers stressed the significance of resource sharing from many different viewpoints. Eugene Wu, librarian at Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, spoke about the difficulties in acquiring Chinese language material. Since each major library needs to maintain a large basic collection, cooperative acquisition is a necessity. He praised the successful program of the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University as a model that others might follow.

Dr. Wu called for the production of more reference works—more indexes, subject bibliographies, research guides—to help people use collections. Susan Hanley, professor in the Japan Program at

(Cont. on p. 102)

E. Asian *(Cont. from p. 101)*
the University of Washington, urged the establishment of programs for the centralization of sources of Japanese language material in the United States, more general bibliographies describing the strengths of various collections, and cooperative projects for the acquisition of certain kinds of minor publications to aid Japanese language researchers. Jack Dull, professor at the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, cited the need for exhaustive bibliographic control of dissertations from China as a high priority among China scholars and librarians.

T. H. Tsien, professor emeritus and curator emeritus of the Far Eastern Library, University of Chicago, addressed the group on the subject of education and training for East Asian librarians in North America. Among his recommendations were the establishment of a more thorough library school education for East Asian librarians and the establishment of an internship for practical training to keep library school graduates in the field.

Dr. Tsuneishi cited many gifts and benefits from East Asian countries and institutions that have helped develop American East Asian collections. He listed some of the many significant professional contributions made in the field of East Asian librarianship by nonnative (émigré) librarians, such as in the development of major collections at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Michigan, Stanford, and the Library of Congress, as well as in the modification of bibliographic control systems, both manual and automated, for application to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean library materials.

In her keynote address, Margaret Chisholm, director of the Graduate Library School of the University of Washington and former president of the American Library Association, praised the focus on area studies as being a significant development in American higher education.

—Philip Melzer

New Service Hours For Cafeteria and Coffee Shop

Effective Monday, April 10, service in the cafeteria and coffee shop will be reserved for staff, congressional staff, and other Federal Government employees, for their guests, and for regular readers with study rooms and study shelves during the hours of 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. During the reserved hours, staff and users will be required to display government identification cards or appropriate passes to the monitor at the cafeteria entrance.

Other visitors to the cafeteria are welcome from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Visitors to the coffee shop are welcome from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Montpelier Room will continue to be open to both staff and visitors during its hours of operation, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

To facilitate visitor access to the cafeteria, the southeast ground floor door (red core) is now open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.

This innovation results from many staff suggestions and a special committee recommendation to establish new food service hours at the Library in order to better serve all persons using the Library.

Former Deputy Librarian William J. Welsh on Faculty at Network Institute

William J. Welsh, former Deputy Librarian of Congress, is a member of the faculty for a national, weeklong residential institute addressing the problems of library networks, consortia, and utilities. It will be presented by the Rosary College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, River Forest, Ill., from May 15 to 19.

Further information about the institute may be obtained by calling the Rosary College Graduate School of Library and Information Science at (312) 366-2490, extension 302, or by writing the Library Network Management Institute, Rosary College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 7900 W. Division St., River Forest, IL 60305.

STAFF NEWS

Judith Dixon: From Clinician to Consumer Relations Administrator

Judith Dixon bubbles with energy and ideas when she talks about her work. Judy is head of the Consumer Relations Section of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS/BPH), and her enthusiasm for her job is fueled by her commitment to creating innovative ways to serve the consumer—the blind or physically handicapped reader.

Judy brings to her job an exceptional combination of clinical and creative skills developed through her training as a clinical psychologist (she has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Adelphi University) and her own life experience (she has been blind since birth).

Before coming to the Library of Congress, Judy was a counselor at a New York college; and before that she practiced more traditional clinical activities. But she became restless with the process of passively sitting and listening during the 50-minute sessions and sought work in which she could be more active.

Her job as head of NLS/BPH Consumer Relations provides the more active role Judy had wanted, yet it also draws on her training as a clinical psychologist.

"The most central part of consumer relations is just being responsive to the patron," says Judy. She notes the importance of being sensitive to the patron's special circumstances.

The Consumer Relations Section was started in 1980, and Judy became its first section head in 1981.

"The section was primarily designed to coordinate and consolidate contacts with individuals and groups," Judy explains. The section logs approximately 150 consumer requests per month, and in response to these Judy makes recommendations for refining NLS/BPH services.

A valuable product of the section is a brochure called "What's New," which provides information on the latest materials and services and is distributed to those attending national consumer conventions. This brochure is available in both braille and large print. The section also functions as an international interlibrary loan center.

Judy's interests extend beyond NLS/BPH, and she is particularly interested in tactile maps and diagrams that aid the blind. This interest stems from her childhood, when her father made cardboard cutouts so that she could conceptualize maps, buildings, and other objects. She was delighted to discover the Library's collection of tactile maps, and she recently presented a paper on tactile maps in East Germany.

Judy has designed a few tactile devices herself. For example, while staffing an exhibit at a consumer convention, she observed that blind persons often had to wait several minutes merely to learn the name of the booth. So she devised a tactile sign that lies flat on the table. She also designed a wallet-sized braille calendar which she calls a "date finder."

Judy has her own private collection of braille slates and writing devices. Her 175 braille slates come from 30 different countries, the oldest one being from Spain, made around 1860. Her collection also includes 40 different braille writers, which are typewriter-like machines with six keys. The oldest one dates from 1894.

In addition to these endeavors, Judy finds time to chair an in-house committee on technology for blind and physically handicapped individuals. She also has traveled throughout the United States and Europe to ski competitively.

When asked what she does not like about her work, Judy laughs and says, "not having enough time—I have so many ideas of things I want to do in the future." For instance, Judy would like to address some of the problems of the blind professional, such as the absence of professional trade publications in braille, and to promote better access to public library collections.

—Olga Padilla

Meetings and Events Around the Library

Thursday, March 16

☐ "This Work had an 'N': African-American Women and Household Work," Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, professor of history, Northern Virginia Community College. LCPA. Mumford Room, 12:10 p.m.

Friday, March 17

☐ Kurt Nikkanen, violin, and Bruce Anderson, piano. Coolidge Auditorium, 8 p.m. Free; no tickets required.

Monday, March 27

☐ N. Scott Momaday presents program on imagery in his painting and poetry. Coolidge Auditorium, 8 p.m.

☐ "The Fabric of Life: Quiltmaking Traditions in America," two-day program. American Folklife Center. Pickford Theater, 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28

☐ "The Fabric of Life: Quiltmaking Traditions in America," second day of two-day program. American Folklife Center. Mumford Room, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Friday, March 31

☐ Juilliard String Quartet. Coolidge Auditorium, 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 1

☐ "Afro-Bets Book Party," Cheryl and Wade Hudson, authors and publishers of African-American children's books and learning materials, Just Us Books Productions, Inc., Orange, N.J. Daniel A. P. Murray Afro-American Culture Association of the Library of Congress and the Center for the Book. Mumford Room, 11 a.m.

Thursday, April 6

☐ "Life After Loss," film screenings. LC Employees Film Society and the Staff Relations Office. Pickford Theater, 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

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